

## ***NOAA Fisheries Forms New Division for Salmon Recovery***

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The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) has created a new division at the agency's Portland office that will focus on developing plans to recover salmon and steelhead protected under the Endangered Species Act in Washington, Oregon and Idaho, according to Bob Lohn, head of the agency's Northwest region in Seattle..

The new office, called the salmon recovery division, will be headed by Robert Walton, currently assistant manager of the Public Power Council in Portland. His new title will be assistant regional administrator for salmon recovery.

"Rob Walton brings a remarkably broad range of experience to this job," Lohn said. "His work in the Northwest and in Alaska and his working relationships with policy and scientific leaders in the Northwest -- including the states, tribes, industry and environmental groups -- give him a superb background for this job."

In addition to recovery work, the division will also coordinate such things as salmon plans in the sub-basin, inland salmon harvests and hatchery policies.

The division will initially have a staff of about 15 persons. Walton, who said he was "excited at the prospect of switching careers to work for NOAA fisheries," is expected to start in early April.

Walton, 55, has been working on fish and wildlife issues for the Public Power Council for 12 years. Before that he was Alaska's state ombudsman, an analyst for Earth Resources Company of Alaska in Fairbanks and a committee staff member for the Washington state senate in Olympia. He served in the U.S. Navy for four years.

Walton received both his bachelor's degree (in engineering) and his master's degree (in science and public policy) from the University of Washington. He lives in Portland.